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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Pattern of conferences

Pattern of conferences

Reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: follow-up

Second report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/58/194 and Corr.1 and 2), reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (A/58/213), and strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: follow-up (A/58/217). During its consideration of the reports, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. The Advisory Committee takes note of the information provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences concerning improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities (see A/58/194 and Corr.1 and 2, paras. 3-48). The Committee takes note with interest of paragraph 6 of the report which states:

> "In accordance with decisions of the Committee on Conferences, the time utilized for informal meetings or consultations held before the start or after the

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adjournment of officially scheduled meetings, when utilizing the same services and with due notification given to the Secretariat, is not included as time lost owing to late starting or early ending of meetings."

3. As indicated in paragraph 37 of the report, a report on the utilization of conference facilities and services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/57/809) was issued in May 2003. That report was a presentation of statistical information and as such contained no recommendations. With regard to the "(f)urther reporting on the considerations of improving and modernizing the conference facilities at Nairobi" mentioned in paragraph 37, the Advisory Committee points out that if such a proposal is received from the Secretary-General, it will be treated in accordance with the procedures outlined in the report of the Committee on building construction procedures (A/36/643), which were designed to allow for close involvement of the Committee at the earliest stages of a building project. In a related matter, the Committee recalls that an amount of $1,427,000 had been requested in the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for renovation and modernization of conference facilities in Nairobi (see A/58/6 (Sect. 33), para. 33.20). In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, the Committee recommended approval of the requested resources (see A/58/7, para. XI.2).

4. The Advisory Committee takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (A/58/213). The Committee attaches particular importance to the concept of integrated global management of the Department as it relates to workload-sharing, and therefore welcomes the launching of a comprehensive study on the fundamentals of integrated global management in cooperation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as mentioned in paragraph 23 of the report. Furthermore, the Committee strongly believes that an interactive capability among the various systems used by the duty stations to track conference-servicing capacity is an essential prerequisite of global management of the Department. In this connection, the Committee notes that, as mentioned in paragraph 22 of the report, an information technology expert group has been established which will focus on these issues. The Committee has commented on these and other matters in detail in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (see A/58/7, paras. I.30-I.87).

5. The Advisory Committee takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: follow-up (A/58/217). The Committee has commented, in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (see A/58/7, paras. VII.1-VII.16), on the issues covered in the report of the Secretary-General.